

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #7]

12/15/38

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1938-9 Paper #7 Interview with Vito Cacciola

by Morton R. Lovett

"As well as remembered"

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Page 1 Interview with Vito Cacciola

by Merton R. Lovett

(From Memory)

"Sure I tella you how I cooka de mushrooms. First you washa them. Boil him six or eight minutes. Then fry dem in oil or bacon. Bacon fat is de besta. But I don't tink you lika Italian food, Mr. Lovett. You recustomed to eata sweeta cakes and de pies. Italian food maka your health impaired. Sure you must eata de garlic for health.

"No we don't eata de garlic like de onion. I just puta de taste in de food. Sometimes I ruba de pot with de garlic. Too mucha is no good.

"Perhaps your American food be bad for my system. Perhaps you giva me rubarb pie. One American lady bringa me some rubarb pie. I no lika it. And de Americans eata too much fried foods, it make de stomach sour.

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"Sure, France, she always a bigga cheat. When Germany fighta France and England dey bega Italy to help. She say if you do not helpa us, France be smash-ed. She maka us a bargain. She promise for Italian help Corsica, Tunisia and some country on de Adriatic.

"After de war France and England divide up de German colonies. To Italy dey giva nothing. We must fighta even to get de city of Fiume.

"President Wilson was a crazy man. He helpa rob Italy. He make sucha mess in Europe that soona we have more war. Tis good ting when de Senate order Wilson to coma back home.

"For long time Italy poor and weak. Now she's a greata nation and big. Mussolini tella France, 'you must keepa your bargain. Giva to us what you promise or it be justa to bad.'

"Sure Germany will helpa Italy. Italy don't needa help to licka France, but she geta it. Hitler and Mussolini are mucha friends, what you call, close together as two thieves, is it not?

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"No! Napoleon was an Italian. He liva on Corsica but Corsica was once de part of Italy. All de best generals wasa Italian. Looka at Garibaldi, Caesar and Napoleon.

"Hah! Hah! Mr. Lovett. You no believe in Santa Claus. My little niece, she six years in age. She believe in dat cheat no more.

"Her mama take her shopping. In de store was a Santa Claus. He hida behind de red coat and whiskers and say, 'My dear, whata you want Santa Claus to bringa you? Oh! So you wanta doll and a game and de book with de pictures. You be a good girl and I giva you them in stocking.'

"Then he say to de mama, 'Would your little girl lika de present now? We have de grab in de bag for ten cents.'

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“So Joanine, she puta her little hand in de bag and pull up de prize. When she getta home her mama saya 'See de present what Santa Claus giva Joanine.' But my niece a smarta little girl. She say, 'Thata was no Santa Claus. Mama must paya him de money for my gift.'

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“In Sicily now there is no Santa Claus. The mamas say that de Infant Jesus giva de presents to de children. Not much presents do the children get, most always a bit of money, or nuts or candy.

“But the night before Christmas is a bigga festival. The people must wait before the church to getta in. At midnight de crowds inside. When all de seats are fill-ed, de peoples stand. The church was all bright with candles. I play-ed de organ. De is beautiful processions. De priests speaks and chanta. De peoples singa de hymns. De sun rises before everyone leava.

“I remember that on de Christmas I always hava my pockets full of nuts. With them de boys play a game. It was mucha fun. We digga little hole in de street. In de hole one boy puta penny. The other boys stand away and pitcha de nuts. They trya to get dem nuts in de hole where is de penny. Eacha boy tosses eight nuts. If he geta four in de hole he geta de penny. If he miss de odder boy keepa de nuts. It was someting lika what American boys play with de marbles.

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“Yes, we play another game. We usa oranges — de little ones that grow wild. On de ground is puta one orange and eacha boy piles on dis orange a penny. Our pennies wasa big like fifty cents. Then from fifty feet away eacha boy tosses his orange. He wisha to knock down de money. When a boy hitta it de pennies fall and rolla all over. Den de boys getta all de pennies what is nearer his orange.”